



October 31, 2019

President Marybel Batjer
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: Unnecessary PSPS Events and Their Impact on our Communities

President Batjer and Commissioners:

As you are aware, no County is better able to understand the threat of wildfire and disaster than Lake County. Prior to recent weeks, we had suffered ten cumulative natural disasters in a four-year period. Those disasters threatened many things that we value. People that have trusted County and State institutions for generations to represent them well are now doubting that representation. It is our job to hold those responsible, accountable.

Lake County residents have endured enough. Natural disasters, brought in unheard of frequency in part due to nature, but largely due to human decisions made by bureaucratic systems and groups of people that may not be able to find Lake County on a map – those natural disasters were enough.

Decades of State and Federal policies isolating, rather than strengthening our communities in our times of need, deepening the human and economic suffering of our people, were enough.

Lake County is familiar with economic challenges, as well, and we have been able to compete despite them. PSPS events, and the ill-made decisions that brought them, are now crippling our businesses, and the human costs are both incalculable and preventable.

All of our previous hardships were more than enough to more than frustrate the sense of normalcy of countless people in our County. Now, however, our communities are facing a very particular and wholly unacceptable kind of human created disaster, and the California Public Utilities Commission has accepted, even authorized this destructive and abusive pattern.

Our 11th disaster in four years was brought not by wildfire, not by flood, but by the negligence and abuse of authority of the Pacific Gas & Electric Company and the California Public Utilities Commission. PG&E's PSPS strategy to prevent wildfire is absolutely inappropriate and unsustainable, and will not be tolerated.

With our communities facing uncertainty due to the surrounding Kincadee and Burris wildfire events, communications were limited, as some cell providers struggled to maintain service, due to inadequate backup generation. That is unreasonable and unacceptable.

Employees of some previously thriving Lake County businesses are now teetering in the face of a PSPS-created unknown, and that is unreasonable and unacceptable.

The ability of innumerable low income County residents to meet even their most fundamental needs was severely threatened by loss of work and wages. We all heard of these cases through friends and family, and we helped where we could, but where was PG&E, and where was the Commission, when rent came due, and a lack of power had left these individuals subject to undue stress, late fees, credit card debt and fear of eviction, through absolutely no fault of their own? Enough is enough.

Our County government, already faltering from the many types of disasters we have recently faced, was not spared by the PSPS. We prepared in advance and we fought with everything we had to respond once the PSPS came, spending \$672,700 on generators and installation, not to mention the organizational financial and other costs associated with loss of over 9,000 staff working hours in anticipation and during the 10/9 PSPS Event, alone, as we work to serve our constituents at a time when departments are understaffed by greater than 21%.

Lake County's fiscal crisis is well known, well publicized. Senator McGuire, Senator Dodd, Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, our Board, and County staff have brought our financial condition to the attention of the State Legislature and your Commission. Yet, PG&E and the CPUC failed to extend an appropriate and affordable opportunity for us to prepare our residents and governments prior to hitting us with wave after wave of outages. Enough is more than enough.

So many of the people affected, so many of our friends and neighbors are anonymous in their suffering. It is not an option for PG&E's leadership and your Commission to remain anonymous while California's most vulnerable deal with the effects of your misconceptions and wrong-headed decisions. We refuse to stand by as Lake County residents continue to bear the cost. That is not an option.

PG&E's horrifically maintained electrical infrastructure has been found responsible for some of the largest wildfire events in recorded history, quite possibly including the Kincade Fire, which in fact broke out during a PSPS. Those wildfire events caused financial devastation and tore at every fiber of social fabric in California's communities and resulted in dozens of wrong and highly preventable deaths. Yet, despite these obvious, unfathomable failures of insight from their highest leadership, your Commission has enabled the Pacific Gas & Electric Company to hold Californians hostage by initiating crippling power outages in the name of "Public Safety."

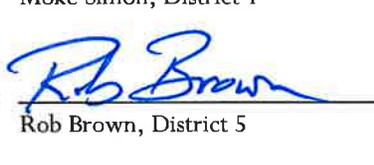
The result has been decision after decision, clearly made toward the end of protecting PG&E's own legal interests, and their own bottom line, at thoroughly unwieldy expense to California's utility rate and taxpayers. Clearly, PSPS Events are not the solution, and cannot be allowed to become our new normal.

The public depends on the CPUC to stand up to abuse by our Public Utilities, and they deserve much, much better. Enough is enough, for Lake County and all residents of California.

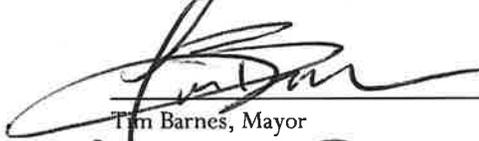
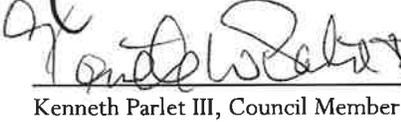
Our three entities have come together in response to a terrible humanitarian crisis in our communities, enhanced by both CPUC regulations and PG&E's implementation. Please consider this only the beginning of our response, with further recommendations and demands for shared accountability to follow. In the interim, please consider the attached small sample collecting input describing the PSPS-inflicted human suffering of our constituents.

Sincerely,

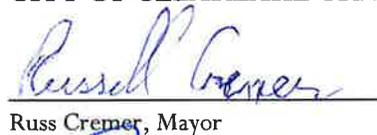
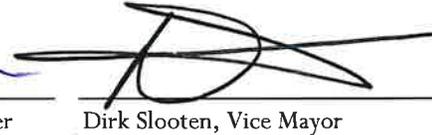
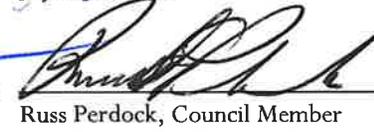
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Cc: Congressman Mike Thompson; Congressman John Garamendi; Senator Dianne Feinstein; Senator Kamala Harris; Governor Gavin Newsom; California State Senator Mike McGuire; and Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry

Attachments: Exhibit A – Public Comment via Email; Exhibit B – Public Comment via Facebook

For additional comment, also see <https://www.facebook.com/lakecountycagov/videos/> and the Board of Supervisors' October 22 Item 6.7, at http://lakecounty.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=1&clip_id=348.

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